

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of fixing adjoining vertebrae of the spine of a patient, comprising:  
  
inserting into said patient an access device to a surgical location adjacent the spine with said access device in a first configuration having a first cross-sectional area at a distal portion thereof;  
  
actuating said access device to a second configuration having an enlarged cross-sectional area at said distal portion thereof;  
  
delivering a first fastener through the access device to the surgical location;  
and  
  
advancing said first fastener through a first vertebra and into a second vertebra.
2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the access device is inserted via a generally posterior approach.
3. The method of Claim 1, wherein the access device is inserted via a posterolateral approach.
4. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the introduction of a boring tool to the surgical location through the access device and advancing said boring tool to create a tunnel through the bone prior to delivering said first fastener.
5. The method of Claim 1, wherein the surgical location is scored prior delivering the fastener or boring through the bone.
6. The method of Claim 1, wherein the method of fixation is transfacet pedicle screw fixation.
7. The method of Claim 1, wherein the method of fixation is translaminar facet screw fixation.

8. The method of Claim 1, further comprising delivering through an access device a second fastener to a second surgical location at the spine and advancing the fastener through the first vertebra and into the second vertebra, said fastener substantially preventing movement of the first vertebra relative to the second vertebra.

9. The method of Claim 8, further comprising prior to delivering said second fastener, introducing a boring tool to said second surgical location through the access device and advancing said boring tool to create a tunnel through the bone.

10. The method of Claim 8, wherein said second fastener is delivered through the same access device used to deliver said first fastener.

11. The method of Claim 8, wherein said second fastener is delivered through a second access device.

12. The method of Claim 8, wherein said second fastener is delivered through a cannula.

13. The method of Claim 8, wherein said second surgical location is scored prior delivering said second fastener or boring through the bone

14. A method of treating a spine of a patient, comprising:

inserting an access device into said patient to a surgical location adjacent the spine with said access device in a first configuration having a first cross-sectional area at a distal portion thereof;

actuating said access device to a second configuration having an enlarged cross-sectional area at said distal portion thereof; and

fastening through a first vertebra and into a second vertebra one or more fasteners delivered through said access device, said one or more fasteners providing a transfacet fixation method substantially preventing movement of the first vertebra relative to the second vertebra.

15. The method of Claim 14, wherein the access device is inserted via a generally posterior approach.

16. The method of Claim 14, wherein the access device is inserted via a posterolateral approach.

17. The method of Claim 14, wherein a single access device is used to approach the surgical location adjacent the spine.

18. The method of Claim 14, wherein multiple access devices are used to approach the surgical location adjacent the spine.